

CLINICUS RESURGENS:  
OR, THE  
Infirm Man made Whole.  
A  
SERMON

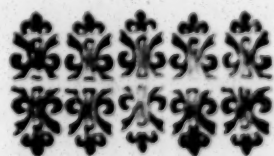
Preached at  
KENTISH-TOWN Chappel  
( By way of Thanksgiving )

After a Recovery from a dangerous Fit  
of Sickness. 5

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By JOHN OWEN, Chaplain to the Right Honourable  
HENRY, Lord GREY of RUTHEN.

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To the Right Worshipful  
Sir Thomas Wolstenholme  
OF THE  
Parish of *EDMUNTON* in the  
County of Middlesex, Baronet.

SIR,

**F**rom the first time that I had the Honour of your Neighbourhood and Acquaintance, I have been constrain'd to entertain and cherish a High and venerable Opinion of You, from a deep sence of your Eminent Worth and Goodness; and have counted it a great Felicity to live in Propinquity to so Good a Man, and so Choice a Christian. And indeed, what can be a greater Blessing, than to live within the Influences of a Person whose Goodness is equal to his Greatness, and by whose Example men may be instructed and taught the Practise of those Virtues which are the very Life and Soul of Religion. Pure Religion, says St. James, 1 ver. ult. and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their affliction,  
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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

and to keep himself unspotted from the World : that is, Religion does not consist in a bare, empty, formal Profession, but in doing acts of Kindness and Mercy, and keeping a man's self free from those gross Pollutions which are in the World, through Lust and Covetousness. And herein I can affirm (without fear of the least contradiction from any,) that you have been a true Practiser of Religion, and have explain'd it to the very Life, and described it to others to the best advantage ; that is, by such Actions as have made Religion visible, tangible, and material, How Great and Extensive your Charity has been in all kinds to the Poor, how great your Relief, and how free and ready your Bounty to the Distressed, and those that have been perfect Strangers to you, I myself can sufficiently testify ; and what a Prop and Support you are to the Widow and Fatherless, and how habitual Mercy and Goodness are to you, is too well known to need any further Publication.

But besides these, there are some Virtues which seem to be very much founded in your Nature, and inherent in your constitution. For, as Meekness, Patience and Affability seem to be the Acquists of a mighty and extraordinary Grace in others, so they flow so freely and kindly from you, as to appear the meer Results of your Natural Temper and Disposition ; and so remarkable is your Justice and Equity in your necessary Commerce and Dealings in the World, that I durst aver, The Sun may as soon be drawn from his Line, as you be brought to do the least Wrong or Injustice to the poorest man living.

And



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

And by such Actions as these have you both publish'd and prov'd the truth and sincerity of your Religion, and made Religion to appear like it self, Prolifick, and fruitful of good Works. For, whilst some have satisfi'd themselves only with making a great Noise and Talk of Religion, a splendid shew and Out-side of Piety, it has been ever your greatest care to become really and substantially Good; and whilst others have troubled their Heads with dry and fruitless Speculations and Airy Notions in Religion, your Business has been to pass it into useful Demonstration. This has been always the course and Practise of your Life; neither can any man take a better course to render himself infinitely dear and acceptable both to God and Man.

And now that I have made a bare recital of your Virtues, which truly and really deserve a Panegyrick, there can be little or no need of ripping up your Pedegree, or to attempt the Blazoning your Arms for the doing you any further Honour; seeing that 'tis Honour enough, that not only a Vein of Piety but Loyalty too has run in a constant Line through your Family, and that you owe your great Sufferings as well as your great Riches, to your Zeal for Majesty: So that what was inscrib'd by way of Everlasting Honour upon the Statue of an old Roman Loyalist, That he was one always True, and of impregnable Loyalty towards his Prince, is but the just and deserved Character of your Family.

*Pietatis immobilis erga Principem. Suet. in Vit. Vespasiani.*

But yet I fear your Worship may be in danger of suffering

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

ring some Dishonour by the Dedication of such a thin, slender Discourse as this, which, besides the weak management of it, comes into the World with greater Disadvantage than ordinary, as being Preach'd in a private Place, in a thin Auditory, and by an Obscure Man, and as having no Great Name or Title to recommend and set it off; But albeit, I beg your Patronage of this Poor Sermon, yet I would have the World know that I am willing to take all the faults in it upon my self, and if you will be pleased to pardon the Boldness of the Dedication, I hope there are no other faults but what are pardonable.

Perhaps there may be some that may be ready to accuse me of Imprudence, and think my Zeal far greater than my Discretion, in permitting a Discourse of this Nature to take Air, and walk publicly abroad; But I am not altogether destitute of a Reason why I thought good to publish it, which being produc'd, will, I presume, give a tolerable account and satisfaction to any sober and unprejudic'd Person, both as to the justice and Reasonableness of the thing; for, having had a signal Deliverance from the Grave, to which I was making very near approaches in a late dangerous Sicknes, I look'd upon my self, after so narrow an Escape, to be under a special Obligation of Declaring the Goodness of the Lord, in so graciously preserving me in the Land of the Living, and that it was not enough to confine my Grateful Resentments of so great a Mercy within the Precincts of a private Oratory, but ought rather to erect some Publick Monument of my Gratitude to Almighty God, and thereby  
make



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

make my Thanksgivings as signal and remarkable as was my Recovery.

But if any should inquire the Reason of my assuming the Confidence to intitle Your Worship to this Discourse, I can return them no other answer, than that I have some particular Reasons for it: And the first is, Because of that great share and interest in your Friendship, which you have been pleas'd to allow me above any thing I can pretend to deserve. And another Reason is, Because of your Exemplary Devotion in the Publick Assemblies, whereby you become a true Transcript of the Original in my Text.

Lastly, Not to make any further incroachments upon your precious Time, I have only this Favour to beg of you, that you would not suspect me to have got the modish Itch of Scribling, or that I am — tenet insanabile multos very fond of being seen in Print; Scribendi Cacoethes — But to believe, that I am willing Juv. Sat. 7. to venture my Reputation to the Mercies of a Censorious World, rather than not give some publick Testimonies of the great and singular Reverence I have for your great Worth and Merits, and to shew plainly to the World how much I really am,

S I R

Your most Faithful and

Obedient Servant

JOHN OWEN.





St. JOHN 5. ver. 14.

*Afterward Jesus findeth him in the Temple, and said unto him, Behold, Thou art made whole : Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

THE occasion of these words of our Saviour, was from the wonderful and instantaneous Cure which he had newly wrought upon a man that had been for a long time sick and ill, and laboured under a Chronical and inveterate Distemper, of no shorter a standing than eight and thirty years ; so that we may easily imagine that the man was almost spent and worn out with the long continuance of his Disease : wherefore, hearing of the Pool of *Bethesda*, which was so famous for Waters of a salutary and medicinal nature, when agitated and put in motion by an Angel, who was wont to descend thither at certain Seasons for that purpose, he was brought, or ordered himself to be conducted thither, to the end he might receive the same benefit by them, which thousands had experienced, in being healed

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of

of their several Infirmities and Diseases. But when he was laid in a propinquity to the *Pool*, there was such crowds of weak and impotent People, and such striving to get in first, by reason of that *sovereign* and *healing* Vertue, which was only communicated to those that could get the primary Contact of the Water, upon the immediate motion by the *Angel*; so that, not being able to help, or shift for himself, through the greatness of his Infirmary; and much less able to make his way and passage through such throngs of People as lay before him in readiness to pop into the Pool, and to take the advantage of the first *moving* of the Water: He began, as we may reasonably suppose, to despair of getting a *Cure*, or reaping any benefit by the *motion* thereof.

But, whilst he lay bemoaning his *helpless* condition, it happened out so fortunately for him, that our Saviour, being in the place at that very time, cast his Eye upon him, and was pleased to take notice of his Infirmary, and inability to help himself, and put the Question to him, *Wilt thou be made whole?* To which the impotent man presently made answer, That it was his earnest and longing desire, and the main end of his being there, to find a *Cure* by using those means which others did with such great success: but alas! he saw he was not like to succeed, as being debarr'd the means by the Anticipation of others, who ingrossed the Vertue  
of



## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 3

of the Water, by taking the first possession of it ; Whereupon, our Saviour taking compassion on him, and commiserating his case, was pleased to supersede the Vertue of the Water, and the Use of all Outward means and administrations, by speaking a soveraign and healing word ; *And Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk ; and immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked ;* in the 8 and 9 verses of this Chapter.

From whence we may be instructed in these two things ;

First, *Not to neglect or despise the Use of Outward means.*

Secondly, *To refer our selves principally to Gods Care and Providence for our Safety and Deliverance, as this impotent man did, putting himself into our Saviour's hands.*

First then, We are not to neglect or despise the use of outward means ; not to contemn or slight the Art and Skill of the Physician, whom God has ordained for our Good. Give place, says the Son of Syrach, to the Physician, for the Lord hath created him ; in the 38 of Ecclesiasticus, ver. 12.

And herein the Heathen Romans may serve for a Pattern and Example to Christians, who had their Physicians in such honourable Esteem, that they were not contented to dedicate a Temple to *Æsculapius*, as the Father of the Physicians, and the God of all Cure and Medicine, but did also erect a

*Medico Antonio  
Musæ, cuius opera  
Ancipiti morbo con-  
valuerat, Statuam  
are collato, juxta  
Signum Æsculapii  
statuerunt. Suet. in  
Vit. Cæs. Aug.*

Statue of Brass in honour to *Anto-  
nius Musa*, Physician to *Augustus  
Cæsar*, only for having been subser-  
vient to his Recovery from a dan-  
gerous fit of Sickneſs. Our Savi-  
our does not in the leaſt blame or

discommend the impotent Perſon, for applying  
himſelf to the Waters of *Bethesda* for a Cure, or de-  
ſiring to uſe ſuch means as was moſt likely to re-  
deem his Health, though at the ſame time our Sa-  
viour was pleaſed to give an Inſtance of the Divine  
Goodneſs and Power to effect a Cure without any  
foreign aid and aſſiſtance, without the concurrence  
of *Art* or *Nature*. And albeit God was pleaſed, for  
a publick Good and Benefit, to infuſe a Healing  
and Medicinal Vertue into the Waters of *Bethesda* ;  
yet he lets us ſee, by this preſent Cure, that there  
is no ſuch neceſſary Efficacy in any outward  
means, though of his own ordaining, but what  
may be ſupply'd and made good by his Preroga-  
tive of Life and Death, and retaining the ſole  
Power and Gift of healing infallibly in his own  
hands. It was very indiſcreetly done of *Naaman*  
the Leper, to fly out into that extreme paſſion and  
rage, as he did, when the Prophet *Eliſha* order'd  
him to go and waſh in the River *Jordan* ſeven  
times, for the curing his Leproſie, which he jud-  
ged a very improbable and unlikely way to get  
rid of his Diſtemper, and as ſorry, pitiful means



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as could be prescribed ; looking upon the River *Jordan* as but a common Water, and to have no greater curative Vertue than any other River ordinarily in his own Countrey, speaking very slightly and contemptibly of the Prophet's advice, and saying, *Are not Abana and Pharpar, Rivers of Damascus, better than all the Waters of Israel ? may I not wash in them, and be clean ?* So he turn'd, and went away in a rage ; as we may see in 2 *Kings* 5. 12. As if he should say, To what purpose have I taken this long Journey, and travell'd so far out of my own Countrey, only to see and wait upon a Prophet, who, instead of giving me his Opinion and Advice how to cure my Leprosie, and doing something extraordinary that way, bids me go and plunge into the Water, and wash my self in a common, ordinary Water, which is a thing I could have done every whit as well at home as here, and, perhaps, to as much purpose, and so have sav'd my self all this pains and trouble which I have been at in coming to seek a Cure. Surely, my Servant, when she inform'd me how famous this man was for curing the Leprosie, told me an egregious Lye, and has put the sham upon me, and sent me upon a Fool's Errand ; for now I am come to the end of a long and tedious Journey, and have address'd my self with all Reverence and Humility, to this great Prophet, begging of him a cast of his Office, and that he would favour  
and

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and bless me with the Cure of my Leprosie, all the counsel he gives me, and the way which he puts me into, is, to go and wash seven times in a River : a poor, pitiful Business indeed, and which, if I had known as much before, I would not have been perswaded to have stirred, or moved a foot out of my Door, as believing, that I could have as well purifi'd and clear'd my self of my Disease, by washing in the next little Brook, as by washing so superstitiously in *Jordan* seven times, neither more or less, as I am commanded by this famous man of God.

Thus we may suppose *Naaman* to grumble and argue with himself, and this to have been the Language of his Passion, if he had given it vent, when he flung away in that Heat and Fury in which he is described : whereas, if *Naaman* had had but so much Faith and Religion, as to reflect upon the Divine Omnipotency, and how that God can infuse such a Vertue into the most ordinary and common means, as shall make them highly beneficial and efficacious to great and excellent purposes ; and what mighty things have been brought to pass through the Power of the Almighty, by the most unlikely and contemptible means. I say, if he had thus consider'd, he could not have slighted and vilifi'd the Prophet's counsel at such a rate : though indeed, at last, by his Servant's using Arguments to him, as that it was but a small thing,



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thing, and easily done, which the Prophet had commanded, that it was but trying the Experiment, which was done in a trice, and then he might judge concerning the Prophet's Advice by the issue and conclusion, he was at length overcome, and perswaded to follow the Prophet's Direction ; and immediately upon the tryal, he found a vertue much exceeding his Faith, and a bigger Cure than that of his *Leprosie*, which was the cure of his *Atbeism* and *Infidelity* ; in the 14 and 15 verses : So that it is a great Error and an extreme fault in all those that refuse and reject the Use of *outward means*, which are of God's appointment, so as to slight and undervalue the Skill of the Physician, as uncertain and conjectural, as also those Discoveries of the Nature, Qualities, Vertues, and Operations of Herbs, Plants, Minerals, which some have made by their diligent Inquisition and Scrutiny about these things : I say, such an obstinate *rejection* and contempt of *outward means*, does, in a manner, calumniate the Works of God's hands, and reflect upon the Wisdom of the Great Creator, as if he had made some Creatures in vain, and of no Use in the World ; and does contradict God's approbation of his own workmanship and contrivance, when he said, that *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was good* ; that is, Nothing came raw or imperfect, or unprepared for some good Use, out of God's hand ; Nothing  
was

was made by him, though the most minute and inconsiderable *Creature*, but what is serviceable and useful one way or other, though, perhaps it be not given to poor, shallow Mortals to know exactly the true worth and Native Vertue and properties of every Creature under the Sun ; nor yet a skill to appropriate and accommodate them to their proper and singular Uses. But, besides this, our contempt of *outward means* doth seem to maintain the *Stoicks* Opinion of *Fatality*, viz. that it is in vain, in case either of Sicknes or Danger, to attempt our Recovery or Safety by any means or methods whatsoever, and every whit as fruitless to endeavour our preservation, as 'tis impossible to oppose it : but we must stand to our Fortune, and leave the issue and event, whether in Life or Death, to an uncontrollable Decree.

But, although 'tis our Duty to use all lawful, just, and convenient means in order to our preservation in all cases of Sicknes, Trouble, or Danger ; yet,

Secondly, *We are to refer our selves principally to the Divine Power and Providence for our Safety and Deliverance.*

For, we may observe, that as some men do utterly abandon and repudiate all outward means, as insufficient and unavailable to any good : so there are others, who have such a strong Conceit and Fancy for them, as, in a manner, to deifie the  
outward



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*outward means*, and consequently, lay too much stress upon them ; so as wholly to rely and absolutely depend upon *outward means*, and the Arts of Physick for their Relief and Recovery. And this was both the Presumption and Wickedness of *Asa*, that when he found himself ill and out of order, he sought to the Physician, 2 Chron. 16. 12. He did not sue to Heaven for a return of his Health, he did not betake himself to Prayer, as the most Sovereign Remedy in Afflictions : He did not call upon God to rescue and make him whole, or look up to Heaven for Salvation ; but all his hopes and confidence of Safety were placed in the Skill and Consultations of his Physicians : and, I fear, there are too many in the World of the same Humour, and who are guilty of *Asa's* Sin and Presumption, depending more upon the *Arts* of Physick, than the *Blessing* of Heaven for their Recovery ; and, who think it safer to have an Eminent Physician, to prescribe to them, than an Able Divine to pray for them ; and will readily put their Lives into their Doctor's hands, when they think it a hard venture to trust God with the disposal of them. Now, upon what shall we ground this total and absolute Reliance of some men upon *Humane means* and assistance, and, in a manner, discharging the *Divine Providence* of all Care and Concernment in their Preservation ? Upon what, I say, shall we fix this seeming independency upon God, for Comfort and

*Deliverance* out of *Troubles* and *Danger* ; but only upon those *Atheistical Principles* which numbers in this *Age* have been so deeply infected with. For, whoever believes there is a God, and frames a just and right *Notion* of him, so as to conceive him to be such a *Being* as he really is, must, at the same time, believe an *universal Power* and *Goodness* to be the inseparable adjuncts of his *Nature* ; that is, that God is willing and ready to shew *Mercy* to the afflicted, and those that need it ; so that he is also endued with a *Power* to accomplish his *Will* and *Pleasure*, and able to save, to the utmost, those that he thinks fit *Objects* of his *Favour* and *Kindness* ; and to have any other, any straighter or narrower *Notions* of God, is to destroy the *Being* of the true *Deity*, because it argues *Imperfection*.

So that, for a man to rely wholly and entirely upon *Humane aids* and *assurances* in any case of *Danger* or *Distress*, is a certain infallible *Argument* of his *Atheism*. For, whoever believes a *Supreme Deity*, that is the *Rector* and *Governour* of the *Universe*, must also believe his *Omnipotency*, and consequently, will always fly to, and rely, and trust, and depend upon this *Almighty Power*, in all *Straits* and *Exigencies*. For, who, that really believes *God's Omnipotency*, will ever rely upon the frail and brittle *Arm of Flesh* ? Who, that believes an *infinite Wisdom*, will ever trust to the weak and narrow *Judgment* of fallible men ? and, who that believes an *immense*  
*Goodness*



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*Goodness* resident in *God*, will ever resort to any other for Succour and Supply in the greatest Wants, and most pressing Necessities : so that, to fly to *External Aids*, and to depend, and presume altogether upon *Humane means*, for Relief, in our Troubles and Afflictions, whereas the Auxiliaries of *Heaven* are ready at hand for our comfort and support, is to forsake both our *Interest* and *Happiness*, and to throw our selves upon the greatest Hazards and Uncertainties, when, by an early and zealous Address to *Heaven*, we may, in all likelihood, secure our restoration to Health, to our former Enjoyments and Blessings, and a deliverance out of six and seven Troubles, that is, as many as may befall us. And to this purpose the *Royal Psalmist* has many excellent Passages and Expressions. *He is a buckler to all that trust in him*, Psal. 18. 30. *The Lord redeemeth the Soul of his Servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate*, Psal. 34. 22. *It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man ; it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in Princes*, Psal. 118. 8, 9. So that, upon the whole, as we are not obstinately and contemptuously to reject the Use of outward means, when our case so requires, but to make a due application of 'em, with thankfulness to *God* for allowing them to us : so we are, in a more especial manner, to use all instance and importunity with *Heaven* for a prosperous success upon the means so used ; for, 'tis

only *Prayer* that can produce a *Blessing* : And when *God's Blessing* doth accompany the *means*, it will make all our *Medicines* as so many *Vehicles* and *Conveyances* of *Health* unto us ; it will make our *Physick* salutary and healing, and turn every *Dose* and *Potion* we take, into a *Cordial* and *Restorative*.

Without *Prayer* we cannot expect the *Divine Benediction* and *Blessing* either upon our *Persons* or *Fortunes* ; much less, that *God* should, in a manner, raise us from the dead, and restore us from a sore and desperate *Sickness*, to our former *Health* and *Strength*, without due application made to the *Throne of Heaven* ; and therefore 'tis reasonable to believe, that many have had their *Lives* given them, and their days prolonged, as *Hezekiah's* was, meerly as the fruit and blessing of their *Prayers* ; and, that the *Life* of many a good man has been preserved from the pit of *destruction*, either by virtue of his own *Prayers*, or the fervent *Prayers* of the *Righteous* in his behalf.

And thus, having shewed you the great and particular favour and kindness which our *Saviour* did to the *impotent man*, in curing him of an *Infirmity* which had so long possessed him, that it was, in a manner, naturaliz'd ; and also, having evinced it to be our *Duty* to have a due regard to *outward means* in all perillous cases, provided always, that *Prayer* be in conjunction with the *Use of means* ;  
for,



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for, as *Means* without *Prayer* will be fruitless and unsuccessful, so, *Prayer* without *Means* will be but folly and *presumption*; but if they go hand in hand, and are mutually joyn'd and interchangeably used, they are then the most likely to do the most good.

It will be now proper and convenient to observe, in the next place, the Carriage of the late impotent man, and how he behaved himself, and what kind of Life he led, after so *miraculous a Recovery*. And, of this, the Text plainly informs us, that his Carriage and course of Life was very good and pious, and much answerable to the Mercy lately received: for, the next time that our Saviour happen'd to see and meet him, was in no worse a place than the Temple: *Afterwards*, saith the Text, *Jesus findeth him in the Temple*. Whence it may be useful for us to note these two things:

First, *His silent and modest rejoycings in the Mercy received.*

Secondly, *His Solemn Thanksgivings and Publick Devotions, both intimated by his being in the Temple.*

First, Then we may very usefully take notice of his silent and modest rejoycings in the Mercy received.

It is generally seen, how that great and sudden Mercies do so strongly affect us, as to raise a kind of tumult and hurry in the Soul; so that some men,  
upon

upon a great Success in their Affairs, or a Deliverance from some grand and eminent Danger, or the fortunate hit and chance of an Estate dropping to them unexpectedly, are, in a manner, rapt out of themselves, and apt to break forth into wild and extravagant Joys. And truly the Nature of Man is such, that all prosperous Events are apt to <sup>dilate</sup> charm our Senses, and to enravish our Hearts with exceeding pleasure ; so that he must have a special command over himself, that can contain within due and moderate bounds, the resentments of an extraordinary Blessing and Happiness. St. Paul, that great and eminent *Apostle*, and most accomplish'd Divine, who had such a mass of Piety, and such deep infusions of Religion, yet confesses himself in a proneness and danger to suffer too great violent transports of Joy, and that there was given to him a *thorn in the flesh*, and the *Messenger of Satan* to buffet him ; by which *thorn in the flesh*, St. Jerom conjectures that he was extremely afflicted with the Head-ach : and all this pain and temptation was no more than necessary, to keep his Spirit in a due mediocrity of Joy, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of Revelations. And truly, it is a great and difficult work that men have to do in prosperity, and when they tumble in all the great and splendid Advantages of the World ; I say, 'tis a hard work they have to do, under such Circumstances, as, to bridle their Passions,



sions, to restrain the Fury and madness of their Sensual rejoycings, and to humble and lare the Sails of their Spirits, that they do not over-swell with too much Air. It is a thing too frequent among us, and a common practise, for men to signalize their Recovery from Sicknes, and other great Deliverances, with no other Gratulations, but Feastings and great Entertainments, and, perhaps, close up the Festival with Intemperance, and a prophane, scurrilous Mirth. O! how few of us, to our shame and dishonour be it spoken, grow more serious, or devout, or Heavenly-minded by our Afflictions! How great a rarity is it, to see any Amendment or change in us for the better, when God has taken so much Fatherly care, and used such wise and proper Methods to reform us! How few of us are purged from our Vices, notwithstanding we have been so severely under the hands of our Heavenly Physician! and how seldom do our Mercies and Preservations work those ingenuous Effects upon us, as they did upon the Person we are now discoursing of, so as to increase our Devotions, and inflame our Minds with a godly Zeal, or make us more diligent and constant in our Attendance upon Holy Offices and the Publick Worship. Ah! we do little or seldom imitate the pious and good Example before us, but do the quite contrary; for we, God knows, no sooner creep up from our sick Beds, and gather a little strength,  
but

but we are ready to fall down upon the Bed of Lust and Wantonness ; we no sooner crawl abroad, but we are ready to slip into the Houses and Nurseries of Temptations and Debauchery ; we have no sooner recruited and patch'd up our Bodies by *Art* and *Niceness*, but we presently use them to the old exercises of Chambering and Drinking, and quickly put them out of repair again : we are no sooner perfectly well, and made whole, but we are ruffling it among our idle Companions, and, perhaps, telling, with the interposition and emphasis of an Oath, that we have been near going, and was within an Inch of the Grave : so that if Christ were to seek for us, after our Restitution, He might find us sooner at the Theatre or the Revels, than at our Devotions, and in any place sooner than at the Temple, and serving of God. The truth is, the carriage and deportment of most men after Sicknes and great Deliverances, is very faulty and vicious ; for, if they do find in their hearts to celebrate the memorial of God's Mercies to them, and keep a Thanksgiving day, 'tis almost with the same scandalous Rites, as the Heathen used in their *Bacchanalia*, expressing their rejoycings in such a wild, frantick, and voluptuous manner, as is far distant from that Gravity and Sobriety, which Obligations of such a high nature do require and exact from them : whereas, the Person, cured by our Saviour, did not express his Joy in  
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## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 17

any such foolish Raptures ; though we may easily conceive and apprehend, that he must needs have the most quick and delicious sense of ease and pleasure, upon the removal of the clog of an Infir- mity which had hung upon him, and kept him a Prisoner to his Bed for so many years : But he takes his leave of our Saviour in a solemn, humble and reverential posture, and goes away, not making any great talk or Proclamation of his *Physi- cian* or his *Cure*, though secretly rejoicing that he had found both. But, though his Joy was silent and speechless, yet not the less real : for a loud and clamorous Mirth is not always the soundest and most sincere ; and *Solomon* tells us as much, in *Prov.* 14. 13. that there is a Sardonic Laughter, onely from the teeth outwards ; or, according to his own Phrase, that there are those, *whose hearts, even in laughter, are sorrowful.* In brief, this Person was more discreet than to make any great noise of his *Cure*, or to shew himself in the Streets, on pur- pose to be look'd on ; but, being big with Joy to find himself at so much Ease and Liberty, and re- stor'd to his former Activity, he *repairs to the Tem- ple*, and there vents and disembogues the full Tide of his Joy in the most solemn *Praises* and *Thank/gi- vings* to Almighty God, the *Great*, and his *best Benefactor.* And indeed, to whom shall we ascribe the great and most comfortable Blessings of our Lives, our Health, Strength, Liberty, and Prospe-  
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rity, but to God, as the Author and Donor of them, resolving all our good Gifts and Blessings into the Divine Power and Goodness. *What, says the Psalmist, shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards me? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord: that is, though David could not see any way how it was possible to retaliate the Benefits which God had conferred upon him, or be ever able to correspond with the Divine Favours, or such weighty Obligations; yet he pitch'd upon Praises and Thanksgivings, as the best Payment, where there could be no full satisfaction. So that from this Example of the man's going to the Temple, as soon as he could find his Feet, we may be instructed how to behave and demean our selves after a Recovery from any great Sickness, or riddance out of desperate Troubles and Difficulties; namely, to direct our first steps towards God's House, and to enter his Sanctuary with Praises, singing forth our Magnificats, and saying with holy and devout David, While I live, I will praise the Lord, I will praise him with uprightness. And there is great reason for it: For, says he, in another place, thou hast known my Soul in Adversity, and hast delivered my Soul from death. And we may farther learn from his Example of walking to the Temple, to turn our Joy and Felicity, upon the account of any great Temporal Blessing, from Sensual Rejoycings into Spiritual Triumphs and Exultations;*



## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 19

rations ; and be sure not to suffer our grateful Sense of God's *Mercies* to settle in the dregs of a prophane Mirth and Scurrility. And indeed, if we do well consider with our selves, we must needs say and acknowledge unanimously, that the *Temple* is the fittest place to be seen in, after our Recovery from Sicknes, and narrow escapes from Death ; and that hither we ought to walk, and pay our Vows, and offer up unto God that Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving which we owe unto him, for our great and signal Deliverances : for this was the way and practise of the *impotent man*, who, after he was made whole, made his first Address and Presentment of himself to the Temple ; *Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the Temple.*

Where, in the second place, we may observe the solemn Thanksgiving and publick Devotion of the man, after his Restoration, *Jesus findeth him in the Temple.*

Now the Temple at *Jerusalem* was a place set apart and consecrated by God himself to a Religious Use , and for the Publick Performance of Divine Worship ; and hither there was a daily resort, by God's Command, and offering up of Sacrifices of God's own particular choice and assignation, according to the Sins of the People ; and here it was that our Saviour met with his late Patient at his Devotions. A very happy and comfortable sight indeed, to see the Cripple, that he had lately

set upon his Legs, so presently upon his Knees in the Temple ; to see him that could but newly walk, running to Church ; to see him, who had but just now recovered the Use of his Limbs, lifting up *pure* and *holy* hands in the Publick Congregation ; to see a man no sooner at liberty, but frequenting God's House : This, I say, was a lovely and taking sight, and could not, but in a great measure, gratifie our Saviour's Zeal and Affections for *Godliness*, to see the great Religion of the man, and how soon he became a Votary. But his Zeal is yet farther remarkable, if we consider, that after he was *made whole*, he was not content ( as some are ) to praise God in *private*, or to keep a Thanksgiving-day *at home*, or to pick out some certain day in the Year, upon which he would solemnly commemorate the Mercies of his Restitution ; but he repairs to the Temple, and is resolved to give some publick signs and evidences of his Thankfulness and Devotion. From whose Practise and Example, we may learn and be convinc'd, how much it is our Duty to glorifie God, and shew forth his Praises, and to declare the *wonderful* things he hath done for us in the Publick Assembly ; how much we are bound to be present at the Publick Solemnities of God's praise and worship, and to celebrate the Divine Mercies and Goodness unto us in the Face of the whole Congregation. For, whatever some conceited Zealots may think, or how much  
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## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 21

soever they value themselves for their *private Devotions*, yet, 'tis certain, that we are obliged to shew our selves good *Precedents* and *Examples* of *Devotion* and *Piety* to others; which we can never do, as long as we smother and stifle up our *Devotions* in a *Closet*, and confine all our *Religion* within doors: And therefore, if any of us have hitherto satisfied our selves with a *private Gratitude* and *Devotion*, as the full and complement of our *Duty*; let us correct that Error, and, for the future, believe it necessary, and our *bounden Duty*, to endeavour to satisfy others as well as our selves, of the *truth* of our *Gratitude*, of the fervour and zeal of our *Devotion*, by exhibiting some *Publick Testimonies* of it, both for the *Example* and *Confirmation* of others. I will conclude this point, with what *David* thinks fit to do, and his vigorous resolution in the case; *I will give thee thanks in the great Congregation*, *Psal.* 35. 18. And in *Psal.* 22. 22. *In the midst of the Congregation will I praise thee*. And, in another place, he tells us, that the *Lord* is to be feared in the *Assemblies* of the *Saints*; that is, the *Publick* is the fittest and most proper meeting-place for the Exercise of *Religion*, and exhorts to *praise God in the Assemblies*, *Psal.* 107. 32. So that if we think *David's Example* and *Advice* worth the following, we must needs conclude it fitting and convenient to make our solemn *Acknowledgments* of *God's Mercies* to us in the *Publick place* of *Divine Adorations*. For, albeit  
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our Thanksgivings at home may be very Cordial and Sincere, yet there is something in such a Sacred place as this, that will make them more acceptable and Authentick.

And now, having seen the Carriage and Behaviour of the man when he was made whole; how that he was very devoutly given, and, that which is of greater praise, that his Devotion was Publick and Exemplary; the next thing will be this, To take notice of the good *Counsel* and wholesome *Advice* which our Saviour gave the man that was made whole, express'd in these words, *Go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* Which words contain these three following things.

First, *That it was the man's Sin that was the cause of his Infirmity.*

Secondly, *That he was obliged to forsake Sin for the future.*

Thirdly, *The great danger and mischief of a Relapse.*

First, *It was the man's Sin that was the cause of his Infirmity.*

*Sin no more*, is a Counsel or Prohibition, which argues the man to have been guilty of some prævious sin, that he had been formerly in fault, and had sinn'd too much already; and so, in our common Use of the Phrase, when we charge or admonish any Person to do so no more, it is of the same importance, as to forbid him to repeat the same act,



## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 23

act, or to do any thing of the like nature again. And so *Job*, in that pious resolution of his, *chap.* 34. *ver.* 32. that if he had *done Iniquity*, he would *do so no more*, doth plainly intimate, that the reason why he resolved against *offending* for the future, was a vehement suspicion of himself, and consciousness of having done amiss; and therefore this Expression, *Sin no more*, doth inform and satisfy the man that was made whole, of the reason of his late Infirmary, and how that some previous Sin of his was the cause of such a Punishment. And, though there be no mention or nomination of any particular Sin, that might occasion that very specifick Affliction, yet God is pleased oftentimes to observe the Law and Justice of Retaliation, and to punish men in that very same kind wherein they have offended, and so make our Sins legible in our Punishments: Sin is sometimes so imprinted on our Punishments, that he that runs may read why God lays upon us such an Affliction, and makes us suffer in such a particular manner.

But, although our Afflictions do not always correspond with the kind and nature of our Sins, so as to point out plainly to us the particular Causes and Reasons of our Sufferings; yet we are to conclude, that our Afflictions do not causlessly come upon us, but that there are just grounds and reasons why they are inflicted; *I know, O Lord*, says *David*, *Psal.* 119. 75. *that thy judgments are right;*  
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*and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me :* that is, although *David* did not exactly discern all the distinct and proper causes of his Sufferings, yet he did acquiesce in, and was fully convinc'd of God's Justice and Righteousness, in sending such Afflictions upon him ; and that he suffer'd no more than what he justly deserved ; and more than this, did also interpret the Divine Chastisements to be an Argument of God's Favour and special Care over him ; *and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.* So that, albeit we cannot understand the exact reasons why we are thus and thus afflicted, yet we are to look upon our Afflictions as the Punishments due to our Iniquities, and that they are chiefly founded upon our Sins.

'Tis true, that our Saviour tells his Disciples, *John 9. v. 2.* that the man that was *born blind* did not deserve that *unhappiness* upon the score, either of his own, or his Parents sin ; but that it was laid upon him as the subject matter for the Divine Power to work upon : to the end it might be made more manifest and illustrious, by such a miraculous instance of its operation, as producing *Light* out of *Darkness*, and giving *Sight* to him who was *naturally blind*. And this indeed is but a single, and the only instance, that I know of, in all the Scripture, wherein Sin is perfectly and absolutely cleared from having any stroke or influence in Punishment, or being the foundation of our Afflictions.



## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 25

ctions. I am not insensible what might be the particular reason of the Disciples putting this Question to our Saviour, concerning the true Cause of this man's *natural blindness*; as, whether it was from some Sin of his own pre-contracting, or from some indecent Congress of his Parents, which was accounted a great Legal Impurity, and thought by the *Hebrews* to be the occasion of Imperfect Births, and Corporal defects. And that which induced them to suspect that it might as well be some prævious Sin in the Man, as in his Parents, was that Opinion of the *Pythagorean* μετεμψυχosis, and, as *Grotius* observes, the προῦπαρξις Animarum, which did then greatly obtain among the *Jews*, whereby they did believe that the Soul made a *transition* out of one Body into another, and was detruded into a Good or Bad Receptacle of Flesh, proportionably to its Deserts in a former State, being lodg'd there for a time by way of *Trial* and *Purgation*: and thereupon presum'd that the reason of the man's being *born blind*, was by way of *Punishment* for some Sin antecedent to his *Nativity*. And this place is very much urg'd by the Patrons of *Præ-existence* in these days, in favour and defence of that Opinion. But I shall wholly wave that Dispute, as needless and impertinent to my present purpose, and as looking upon our Saviour's Answer to be a plain and sufficient confutation of that Doctrine. But then, although this *natural blindness* of the man was a  
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pure act of *God's Sovereignty*, and was so order'd for a farther manifestation of his *Power*, yet God has no where told us, that he would make this the President or Rule of his future dealings with men, so as to punish them in an *Arbitrary* way, and without any other cause or reason, but because it is his *Will* and *Pleasure*. And therefore, 'tis affirm'd of God, *Lam.* 3. 33. that he *doth not willingly afflict the children of men*, that is, he is loth to go about such an harsh and unpleasing work: and Punishment is not a thing which God delights in, but lays it upon men for weighty and momentous Causes, and is, in a manner, forced thereunto, to the end he may assert and vindicate the *Justice* and *Honour* of his *Laws*. And so, in another place, *Isa.* 28. 21 Punishment is called God's *strange work*, that is, *Rigour* and *Severity* are no ways essential to, but aliene and extraneous from the *Divine Nature*: and when he doth appoint the Rod, 'tis out of the common Road of his *Power*, which generally and naturally exerts it self in doing *Acts* that are *most beneficial* to *Mankind*. And so great is the *Mercy* and *Goodness* of God, and doth so abundantly flow in the *Divine Nature*, that *St. John*, in the first Epistle 4. 8. gives us this description and character of God, that he is *Love*: *For God is Love*: that is, not only *loving*, but *pure Love* in the *Abstract*; and therefore, we have  
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not the least reason in the World to imagine, that God doth afflict men merely for sport, or for the exercise of his Power and Sovereignty; but 'tis some grand Cause and Provocation, which doth cause him to alter or recede from the Natural course and methods of his *Goodness*: so that, al-

though our *Punishments* do not always carry the Preface and Title of our *Sins*, nor have them plainly written in their Foreheads, yet 'tis always safest to believe our *Sins* to be the sole and primary Cause of our *Punishments*, and not to impute them wholly unto *secondary causes*, as either to the Malevolent Aspects of the *Stars*, or some inauspicious Influences of the *Heavens*, or to the Malice and Injustice of Men. I say, 'tis much safer and better for us to impute our *Sickness* and *Diseases*, our *Troubles* and *Losses* in the World, to our *Sins*, rather than to the probable or uncertain *Causes* which the Physician may assign, or to the unlucky Conjunction of the *Planets* at our *Nativity*. For, if we ascribe our Sufferings of this, or any other kind, to any thing but our *Sins*, as the chief and principal Cause thereof, we shall be apt to expostulate the justice

*Docet etiam hac admonitio, quicquid patimur mali, peccatis nostris imputandum esse. Neq; enim fortuita sunt Hominum calamitates, sed totidem sunt castigatoria serule. Primo itaq; manum Dei qua nos percutit agnoscere oportet, non cecum fortune impetum imaginari in malis nostris. Deinde tunc Deo honorem tribuere, quod quum optimus sit Pater ex nostris miseris voluptatem non capiat, ideoq; nunquam durius nos tractet, nisi peccatis nostris offensus. Calv. in loc.*

and reasonableness of God's Dealings with us, and also not to condemn, or think the worse of our selves for our *Sins*, and consequently, not repent of them as we ought; so that, if other Causes are not more visible and apparent, 'tis absolutely the best way to impute a Fever to some *Excess*, or the heats of *Passion*; our Fall to our *Pride*; our sinking in our Estates, or the loss of them, to our *Fraud*, and *Injustice* and *Oppression* in getting them, and such like common Topicks of Disobedience; and, by this means, we shall be the most likely to lay the Guilt and Blame of our Sufferings at the right door: and, whilst we look upon our *Sins*, and really judge them to be the grand cause of our misery and unhappiness, and that they occasion so much mischief both to *Body* and *Soul*, and *Fortunes* too, we shall, doubtless, be the readier, and more inclin'd to condemn and arraign our *Sins*, as our greatest *Enemies*, and consequently, to mortifie and do Execution upon them, and resolve never to hug and cherish them any more. In short it was

the man's sin, as our Saviour told him, that occasioned that long *Infirmity*, and his enduring all that pain and misery; and so must we generally conclude, that if we are afflicted with *Sickness*, or *Pain*, or any other kind of *Adversity*, that 'tis our *Sins* which have done us this unkindness, and brought so much Evil upon us.

*Vid. Chrys. in  
loc. Hom. il. 38.*



## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 29

It must indeed be granted, that God doth send Afflictions for different ends and purposes, and not always as the direct Punishments of Sin, but sometimes for the tryal and confirmation of our Graces: as in the Afflictions of *Job*, and many other Eminent-ly Good and Holy men, throughout all the Ages of the World, who have been exercis'd and train'd up for Heaven, by a severe tryal of Afflictions: And these *Chastisements* of the *Righteous*, are not so much Tokens of God's Displeasure, as Indications of his Love and Favour, and a certain *Criterion* of their *Filiation* and *Relation* to him. But then, notwithstanding that God is pleased to afflict Good men, for the Probation of their Vertues; yet the Scripture being so plain and universal in alledging the Threats, and Comminations of Punishment, with respect to mens Disobedience and wilful Violation of the Laws of God, I shall venture to say, that I judge it safest to place our Afflictions generally, and for the most part, to the account of our Sins, rather then so much magnifie or insist upon God's Right of Dominion over his Creatures, and power to punish them at his Will and Pleasure, as some are wont to do.

Secondly, *Sin no more*, doth imply an *Obligation to forsake Sin for the future*.

*Sin no more*, is as if our Saviour should have said

*Certum quidem est quod nuper diximus, misérias omnes originem trahere ex peccato: sed Deus variis ac causis suos affligit. Calv. in Joh. c 9:*

said to the man restored, You have seen the Power and Mercy of God towards you, in recovering you from such an uncomfortable Infirmary ; you have plentifully tasted how *good* and *gracious* the Lord has been, in making you whole, after the shatterings of such a *long* and *tedious* Disease ; and therefore, upon this large and comfortable Experience of *God's Goodness*, you are obliged, out of a principle of *pure Ingenuity*, not to offend against so good a Benefactor, and Author of your *Ease* and *Happiness*. And truly, *Ingratitude* is the worst, and blackest Crime we can be guilty of, as it respects our Obligations to men ; for, not to acknowledge a Favour or Benefit done us, much more to retaliate the kind Offices and Assistances of our Friends with Scorn and Contempt, is enough to make us perfectly odious and detestable to all Mankind. But then, *Ingratitude*, as it refers to God, must needs be an unspeakable Sin ; and what worse Ingratitude can a man be guilty of, than to fall afresh to his *Sins*, after a signal *deliverance* from *Sickness*, or some eminent, fearful *danger* ? What is this but to return *evil* for *good*, and *hatred* for his *good will* ? What is this but to fly in God's Face for his kindness, and to prove an Enemy, where there is an Obligation to be the greatest *Lover* and *Friend* ? For, if a man should study *Ingratitude* all his days, he could not make a greater or sadder Proficiency in it, than by sinning against God, after some late  
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and wonderful demonstration of his *Kindness* and *Favour*, and thereby reversing all the Obligations of *Nature* and *Conscience*. The Apostle tells us, in *Col. 1. 21.* that we become *Enemies to God by wicked works*: so that to offend him at any time is an act of *Enmity*; but then to do so when he has stood by us in the time of our *Sickness*, and supported us in a day of *Darkness* and *Gloominess*, and has delivered us out of six and seven *Troubles*, is the *Bitterest* expression of *Ingratitude* we can possibly make, and the most desperate *Enmity* we can be guilty of: so that if we had but the least spark of *Ingenuity* remaining in us, we should be horribly ashamed to make such *unhandsom* and *unworthy Returns* to God for his great *Endearments* of us to him, and would rather look upon every *Mercy* or *Deliverance* which we receive, as an *ingagement* to greater *Holiness*, and a strong and fresh *Obligation* to better *Obedience*. 'Tis certain, that our *Sins* contract a greater or lesser degree of *Malignity*, according to the time and other *Circumstances* wherein they are committed; so that although *Drunkenness*, and *Lust*, and *Prophaness*, are foul and grievous *Sins* at all times, yet they rise and mount to greater *Impiety*, when they are acted and done in the very *Face* and *presence* of *God's Judgments*. Surely, says God by his *Prophet*, in *their Affliction* they will seek me early, *Hos. 5. v. ult.* And so does the *Prophet Isaiah* speak to the same purpose, *ch. 26. 9.*

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*For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.* The import and signification of which words is this, that it is a great aggravation of Sin, still to provoke God when his Judgments are actually incumbent upon us; and a monstrous kind of Obstinacy, to continue wicked and impenitent in the very midst of Judgment. But then, how can any man offend more heinously, or contrive to sin with greater affront to Almighty God, than after some great *Memorandum* of his singular Goodness and Mercy to him? For me, when I am freed from the scorching Heats of a *Fever*, then to burn with Lust, and carry an *Ætna* of Impure Flames within me; or having escaped Drowning, then to overwhelm myself in a *Deluge* of Drink; or narrowly missing a despoliation of my *Goods* and *Fortunes*, then to lash out my Estate in *Extremities*, and waste my *Patrimony* by vain Profusions; or lastly, being newly raised from a Bed of Sicknes, then to sink into the Grave of my old Corruptions, and become dead in *Trepasses and Sins*: what is this but to sin with the most unpardonable circumstance, and a direct method to render every such Sin the more exceeding sinful? And therefore, *Sin no more*, is a Rule and Counsel which every one ought to keep and observe very strictly, after any signal and great Preservation; because that the *sinning so afresh*, and immediately upon great Obligations to the

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the contrary, cannot but be the highest Provocation of God imaginable, and does mightily enhance and aggravate the nature and quality of our Sins, and must needs proceed from the most base and unworthy Principles.

Thirdly, and lastly, Here is the great Danger and Mischief of such a Relapse, implied in these words, *Lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Which cautionary Counsel of our Saviour, contains in it these two things :

First, *The danger of greater Calamities in this World.*

Secondly, *The danger of Eternal Damnation in another.*

First, *The danger of greater Calamities in this World.*

Tis for the Interest and Safety of all Persons, to take warning by their *Afflictions*, not to sin any more : but as Sea-marks, which serve to give notice to the Mariners of the Rocks and Quick-sands, and the great danger of making too near approaches, lest, touching upon them, they should be split into Destruction ; so our *Afflictions* should be a standing Signal to us, of the great danger of touching upon our Sins, which are as pernicious as Rocks, and, like *Quick-sands*, will devour and swallow us up. So that if we have once escap'd the danger of a *shipwreck* by our Sins, 'tis best to have a care that we run not upon them again, lest by so

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doing we *finally* perish. For, though God has been so gracious to us, as to spare us this, or the other time, notwithstanding our Demerits, and the *greatness* of our Sins, yet we must not presume that he will spare us any farther, if we still go on, and persist in our *Disobedience*. Though he has been so merciful, as to recover us from a *desperate* Sickness, and to rescue us out of our Troubles, and to redeem our Soul from *Adversity*; yet we must not think to find the same Mercy at another time, in case we do nothing suitable to it: and, though God has for the present given us our Lives, we must not depend upon the same Salvation for the future, if so be we fall to the same *Evil courses*, which brought our late *Afflictions* upon us; but we must rather expect to have a recourse to our Sins punish'd with some *worse* Judgment than has hitherto befallen us: for, if one *Affliction* will not terrifie us, God will send another that shall scare us to some purpose. If this Sickness or great Deliverance do not make us better, more holy, more devout, and take us off from our Sins, we must look for a *sooner* Affliction to come upon us; and therefore we shall wonderfully deceive and cheat our selves into *Destruction*, if, when God hath delivered us from the *snare* of death, and kept us from falling into the *Pit of corruption*, we shall say presumptuously with our selves, as *Agag* once did, *Surely the bitterness of death is past*, and so encourage our selves in our wicked-



## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 35

wickedness : For , though this Sickness has not ( through the great *Mercies* of God ) carried us off, yet our continuance in *Sin* will provoke him justly to send another, that shall certainly tumble us into our Graves ; and, if this great Deliverance from *Trouble* and *Danger*, will not advance and enlarge our *trust* in the living God, and make us more credulous and believing of his *Power* and *Goodness*, we may expect that God will cast us into deeper *Troubles*, and refuse to know, or help us in our *Extremities*, and the day of our distress : For, by our incorrigibleness and impenitency after a Recovery, we shall hazard another Sickness ; and when we are once made whole, and yet sin again, we must expect that a worse thing will come unto us.

God has more ways than one to meet with us, he has methods and strains of Punishment, which we never yet felt or knew ; Is not destruction to the wicked ? and a strange punishment to the workers of Iniquity ? Job 31. 3. So that if one Judgment succeed another for want of our Amendment, it will certainly be more grievous than the former, and take a double vengeance upon us for the repetition of our sins. If the Rod will not do the work, and serve to reform us, God will scourge us with Scorpions : and if we consider, that some men have no sooner sinn'd, but immediately dyed upon it, and other mens Sins have cost them their Lives in their first Sickness ; of how much sorer Punishment, suppose

ye, shall they be worthy, who, having had often Reprieves from Death, and Deliverances out of many Troubles, do yet persevere in their Sins, and offend against so much Goodness. To speak com-

*In summa, hic penarum usus est, ut cautiores in posterum reddamur. Si ad primos & secundos istum opponimus obstinaciam cordis duritiem, septuplo gravius seriet. Calv. in loc.*

pendiously, 'tis certain that a recourse to our former Sins, will cause God to multiply and aggrandize his Judgments; for, so God threatens the Israelites, in case of their obstinacy and impenitence; If you will not for all

this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins, Lev. 26. 18. So that we had need take heed of sinning after Afflictions, lest we fall under some heavier and more terrible Judgment of God. But,

Secondly, *The greater danger of a relapse into Sin, is that of Eternal Damnation.*

'Tis most certain, that as the wages of Sin is Death, so the wages of Impenitency is Eternal death. For, when God has try'd the various ways and methods of his Wisdom and Goodness to reclaim us, and without any Success; we may, in Justice, expect, that the Divine Patience will be turn'd into Fury, and that we shall be hurried out of the World in great confusions of Soul, and with extreme horror and despair of finding the least mercy or comfort hereafter: For, if such Afflictions as Sicknes, Pain, Misery and Distress, will not make us better,



better, and to break off our Sins by *Righteousness* ; and if such Mercies as a *Recovery* and *Deliverance* out of these *Afflictions*, will not oblige us to greater *caution* and *circumspection* in our Lives, and to walk more humbly with our God, our *Iniquities* will certainly be our ruine, and the *renewal* of our Sins will sink us into a deplorable state of *Damnation*. For, what can we expect less from our repeated *Provocations* of the Almighty, than to make him our deadly and irreconcilable Enemy, and consequently, to undergo the severest Penalties of his Wrath and Displeasure against us ; we cannot look for any other reward of our *Disobedience*, after so great Mercies *received*, and so grossly *abused* by us, but that God should cast us off for ever, and consign us our Portion in the dismal Regions of *Eternal Horror* and *Darkness*. And, let us consider what a huge piece of Madness it is for us, when we are *made whole*, to go and destroy both Soul and Body by a repetition of our *Vices* ? What a miserable thing is it, when we are raised from a sick and feverish Bed, to go and throw our selves into a Bed of *unquenchable flames* ? What a woful act is it, when God has delivered us out of *great troubles*, to go and plunge our selves into *endless misery* ? How *unmerciful* and desperately *unkind* are we to our selves, when God has made us to prosper greatly in the World, and has, perhaps, retrieved our *lost Fortunes*, by some *extraordinary Blessing* of his Providence ;

dence; yet, by *uncharitableness*, to march into *Dives's* place of Torments, where we shall not have the mercy of a drop of water to cool our Tongues? O! what a dreadful Folly is it, when God hath saved and preserved us, even to a miracle, then to cast our selves away! And this we certainly do, when we turn to our Sins afresh; and, as the Apostle phrases it, like a Dog to his Vomit, and a Sow to her wallowing in the mire. And therefore, seeing a renovation of our Sins will infallibly prove our bane and destruction, and that, to provoke God by repeated acts of Disobedience, is as much as our Life is worth, and will cost us Eternity, we had need have a special care how we offend God by a Superfatation of Sins, after our Recovery and Deliverances, lest a worse thing come unto us, than those Afflictions which we have hitherto suffered and endured in this World. In a word, a resurrection of our Sins will kill us for ever, and make a final dissolution of our Happiness. Is not destruction to the wicked? says Job; and who are they, as the Apostle speaks, that shall be punish'd with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, but the wicked and impenitent?

And now, having considered the most material Contents of our Saviour's Counsel to the *infirm man*, after his Recovery; I shall only beg leave to draw some Practical Inferences from the whole, and so dismiss your Attention.

First,



## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 39

First, Then *we* are to shew our selves exceeding thankful for the great Mercies of our Preservation.

'Tis God's great and singular Mercy unto us that we are alive at present, and on this side the Grave; and a more especial mark of his Favour to some of us, that we are in such a good measure and degree of Health, as to be able to appear before God in his own House, and to praise him in the Publick Assembly. 'Tis, I say, a wonderful instance of God's Favour and Indulgence towards us, in that he has restored us from a Disease which has been so fatal to others, and has spared us a little longer, and given us farther spaces and opportunities of *Repentance*; whereas, tis much to be feared, that thousands that are lately gone to their *long Home*, have left the World with their *Sins* and *Fears* upon them, and are now entred into the Chambers of Darkness, and an irreversibile state, where 'tis impossible, in the least, to alter or mend their condition. And therefore, how ought we to reflect upon it, as an unspeakable Mercy of God, that we are yet alive, and were not snatch'd away in that sad hurry and confusion which others have, and that God has made us such living Monuments of the greatness of his Salvation? For, if we had dropt away so suddenly as others have, with little or no warning, I do very much doubt whether we had not made a *bad exit* out of the World, and died in a *miserable case*. For, such is our Folly, that  
we

we seldom think of, much less, prepare our selves for *our latter end*, till we apprehend our selves in nigh approaches to the Grave, and, perhaps, have the Messengers of Death in our view. But when we find our selves upon the *Brink of Eternity*, and entering the Borders of *another World*, we are then in *great Distraction*, at a great *loss* and *Quære* what we shall do to be saved : And indeed, what clearness of Thought, what judgment of our Condition, what serious recollection of our past Life, or composedness of Mind can we have ? or what fit preparations can we possibly make for our Voyage to *Eternity*, in the few disturbed moments of a dying time ? so that by such a sudden Arrest of Death, millions of *unprepared Souls* have been undone, miserably undone for ever. And for this cause we are bound to thank God most heartily and sincerely, for that he hath spared us to this day, and not punish'd our *unpreparedness* for dying by a *violent and sudden death*. O, what a blessed gift is *Life* ! and what a precious Enjoyment is *Health*, if we did but value them to their full worth, which we seldom do ! for, although this present Life is but short at the very best, and oftentimes imbittered with various and manifold Afflictions, by *sore and grievous Diseases*, and by *deep misfortunes* in the World, yet, as short and bitter as it is, 'tis highly valuable upon this account, in that it is the only opportunity of preparing for a *better life*.

And



And therefore old *Coriscus* ( as *Sto-  
baeus* recites the Story ) was mightily  
to blame, not only for his Ingrati-  
tude, but Impiety too, who, when  
he had been desperately sick for a long time, and  
yet it pleas'd God to *restore* him, instead of looking  
upon his *Recovery* as a *Mercy*, he seem'd to be much  
troubled that God had spared him his Life, and to  
grumble at his Preservation.

Κόμισατο ἰνὴ μάλα  
γάρων ὡς ὡς ἀπὸ πνέ-  
χαλαπῆς ἀρρώστιας  
ἀνθρώπων ἀπαχθῆναι,  
ὡς ἀνδρὶς ἀνέσφορα.

And so is our *Health* of the same valuation, and  
to be priz'd by us at a very great Rate ; forasmuch  
as *Health* is the great Instrument of *Action*, and the  
only season for our minding both our Temporal  
and Eternal *Interests* : for, when a man is in Sick-  
ness and great Pain, he can have little power or  
mind to look after the World, or to pursue Riches  
and Honour, and such splendid *Nothings* ; but is  
forced to lay aside all *Business*, and to become a  
Bankrupt as to the World. And any of us that  
doth know what Pain and Sickness is, and, I be-  
lieve, there are few or none of us but what have  
felt them, by a woful Experience, must needs have  
observed how much the Powers of the Soul are  
disorder'd at such a time, and that they closely  
sympathize with the Sufferings and Indispositions  
of the Body ; so that that man that could pray  
*Seraphically* and like an *Angel*, when he was in  
*Health*, can hardly make a Prayer with any Sense,  
or connexion of Thoughts, much less with any  
lively

lively fervour of Spirit, or suavity of Soul, when he is conflicting with a *sharp and dolorous Disease*. A Regular and Vigorous Devotion, must have strength of Constitution as well to *raise*, as to *support* it; for though the Spirit is willing, yet if the *Flesh be weak*, we shall find a great ineptitude and unfitness for *Spiritual Performances*. The higher Powers and Operations of the Soul, are much influenced by the *Crafs* and *Temper* of our Terrestrial Part, and more, if we may believe the *Modern Philosophy*, by the Laws of *Mechanism*; whence it follows, that our Zeal must necessarily faint and decay with the languor of our Spirits, and that we cannot be right for Devotion, when our Bodies are out of order. And we would do well also to consider, that the most Eminent Virtues of Christianity, are hardly practicable in a time of Sicknes: for then Patience is apt to turn into Peevishness; Submission to God's Will, into Mutinous Thoughts and Complaints; Faith, into Fear and Tremulous doubtful apprehensions of the Mercies of God: then the Forgiving our Enemies will seem a thing more of Constraint, than Willingness, and look more like want of Power to Revenge, than a generous Pardon; then the Contempt of the World will be no more a Vertue, than is the despising what we cannot enjoy; then Charity can only Will and Subscribe so much to the Poor, and if we have not train'd up our Passions in obedience to our Reason before we come to lye upon a Sick Bed, we shall then find them



them in a manner *insuperable* ; because that *Sickness* instead of allaying our *Passions*, usually gives *Fire and Rage* to them ; instead of *cooling*, does but *inflame* them the more ; nothing in *Nature* being more *Touchy, Humorsom and Impatient*, than a man in terrible *Pain and Anguish* : And as for *Self-denial and Mortification*, they are too Great a Work for *Flesh and Bloud* to undergo, when they lye groaning under the Burthen of a *Disease*, and are ready to fall to the Ground with the Heaviness of their own weight : so that our *Health* is the only time for *Piety and Devotion* to flourish in, and for the performing a Great, Active and Excellent Obedience ; every Sick man finding it work enough to bear his *Infirmities*, and to follow the Nice Prescriptions of the *Physician*. If then we neglect so fair an Advantage for the working out our *Salvation*, as is the time of our *Health*, we shall be guilty of the most dangerous *Folly and Presumption* ; forasmuch as the days of *Sorrow* hasten on apace, and the years draw nigh, when we shall say that we have *no pleasure* ; that is, not only sigh away our time in *Bitterness and Melancholy*, by reason of the continual *wastings and consumptions* of *Nature*, whereby our *Life* shall become tedious and burthensom to us ; but shall also find the *Duties of Religion*, through the *uneasiness* of the *Flesh*, to prove in the nature of a *Penance* : for what *Seneca* observes of *Vice* in general, how that *laborat fastidio*

*sui*, holds true also concerning crazy and decrepit Age, namely, that it grows sick and weary of it self. It is then highly Necessary and Expedient, that we begin the Practice of Religion in due time, whilst we have our *Wits* intirely about us, whilst we are in the gaieties of *Health* and *Strength*, and able to bear the yoke with *chearfulness*; or, as the Prophet *Jeremy* prescribes, *ch. 13. v. 16. before our feet stumble upon the dark Mountains*, that is, before we come to the fatigues of Life, and fall into the Ruines and Infirmities of Old Age: nay, our Saviour further telleth us, *the Night cometh when no man can work*. And if so, it will be our best and wisest course to follow *Solomon's* Advice, *Ecclesiastes 9. 10.* to bestir our selves to some purpose, and to set our selves roundly to work out our Salvation; and that for this very reason, because *there is no Work, no Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave, whither we are all going*; so that if we neglect our main work till Sicknes or Age do overtake us, 'tis likely to be but sorrily done, if it be done at all; that being a very improper state, as I just now intimated, for Religious actions, and, possibly, we may be cut off by a sudden Death, or seized with such a stupifying Disease, as is the *Apoplexy*, and so find no room or place for *Repentance*. And therefore, if we rightly and duly consider the great Mercy of *Life*, as it is an opportunity to prepare our selves for a better; and how much greater

Mercy



Mercy it is to have it sweetned with the appendages of *Health* and *Strength*, whereby we are enabled and fitted both for the Service of God, and of our selves too : We must needs look upon our selves as bound to glorifie God with the highest praises ; and what can our great and miraculous Preservations in such a sickly and dangerous season as we have lately known, and our signal Recovery from a Disease which has made such a sweep among us ; what, I say, can this notable Salvation challenge from us, less than the most Grateful Resentments ? and how can we better express our Gratitude to the Father of Mercies, than by honouring him with our Lives, or, in the Psalmists words, praise him with uprightness, that is, a Universal Goodness and Righteousness of Life ? Wherefore,

Secondly, *We are to make a good Use and due Improvement of our Mercies and Preservations.*

When we are made whole by God's great Power and Goodness, there is another Amendment required on our part, and that is, that we prove sound in our *Morals*, and a Recovery of *Virtue* succeed the Recovery of our *Health* ; for, unless there be an equal Soundness of *Body* and *Soul* we can never be really and perfectly well ; and indeed, a distempered vicious *Soul* is the worst Sickness of all : And therefore, when we are restored to Bodily Health, and cured of our outward Infirmities, 'tis but highly just and reasonable that we should look

to the cleansing of the Inward Man, and purging the Soul of all its corrupt *Qualities*, and depraved *Affections*; for, if the least Filthiness or Corruption do adhere to the Soul, we can never be thoroughly Right, and the *Health* of the *Body* will only be the Cover of a desperate rottenness within. And

*Abſit ut aliquis ita interpretetur, quafi eo ſibi etiam nunc pateat ad delinquendum, quia patet ad pœnitendum: & redundantia clementia cœleſtis libidinem faciat humana temeritatis. Tertul. de Pœnitentia lib. c. 7.*

therefore that is a most dangerous and pernicious Error of some men, to think that they are delivered only to commit farther Wickedness, and look upon their Recovery from Sickneſs to be only a whet to their Sins, and to re-

fresh their Appetites to their *Vices*: And they pretend to underſtand the courſe of Nature ſo far, as to believe Sickneſs to be ſometimes a very neceſſary Phyſick, in order to the purging and lighting, and exonerating the Body of thoſe groſs Humours which it is apt to contract by a long permanence of Health; and which, unleſs they are cleared of by Sickneſs or ſome ſuch way, would ſo clog their Spirits, as to hinder their Activity in ſinning, and very much dull their Taſte and Reliſh of *Sensual Pleaſures*; ſo that theſe men judge the only Uſe of Sickneſs, and a Recovery from it, to be this, *viz.* to help them to enjoy their Sins with more delight, and to heighten the ſenſe of pleaſure. And truly, I fear, that this Opinion is too  
riſe



rise and prevailing among us, and that it causeth us to take encouragement from our Preservations to sin the more ; as if God had restored us, and recruited our strength, that we might be the stronger to sin, and the abler to fight against Him with his own *Mercies*. So that it oftentimes happens, that *Afflictions* do us more harm than good, meerly from this *Atheistical Tenet*, That Sicknes is a thing altogether of course, and both proper and necessary, in order to a farther invigoration of our sinful and carnal Appetites ; whereas, 'tis most clear and evident from Scripture, that *Afflictions* are designed to leave us better than they found us ; and that God doth every where declare plainly and positively, that it is mens Amendment and Reformation which he principally aims at in all his Judgments : and therefore we are firmly to believe, and to entertain no other thoughts, but that our Sickneses, and great Deliverances from them, do oblige us to a new course of Life, require us to turn over a new Leaf, and to take out a new Lesson of Obedience : so that every one of us should begin to argue with himself the reason of God's Goodness, and preserving him in such a manner, saying, Why am I thus wonderfully snatch'd out of the Jaws of Death ? and, why has God so miraculously *made me whole*, and lengthned out my days ? Is it for any such reason, as that such a poor, worthless Creature as I am, can add any Moments  
to

to his Felicity, by my living in the World ? or that my Service can any way be profitable to the Almighty ? Surely no : But God has spared me for my own Good, and the Good of others, to the end I might repent of my Sins, and attract others to the *Love and Practice* of Religion, by my good Example ; and become the Light and Ornament of my Generation. And thus we should always conclude with our selves, that our *Deliverances* from Death are for some weighty Ends and purposes, and that we are reserv'd for some *great and glorious deeds*, so as to out-do all the World in Piety and Virtue, and to live such a Life as may speak us to be more like Angels than the Men we formerly were. This we should apprehend to be the expected Fruit of God's *afflicting* us at any time, and the reason of our coming so fairly off with our *Lives*, namely, that our *casting down* might cause us to *rebound* the higher in Vertue and Goodness.

Let us then a little examine what we are improv'd by *Afflictions*, and what change, for the better, the Recovery of our pristine Health and Strength hath wrought upon us ; Have they abstracted us any whit the more from the Body, or subdued us to the World ? Have they quenched our thirst after *Honour*, and *Secular Glory* ? Have they allay'd the Heats of our Lusts and Anger ? or, have they brought us out and set us free from slavery to *Base and Vile affections* ? It were happy indeed



## *The Infirm Man made Whole.* 49

indeed if it were so ; for such a change as this ought to be the Event of our *Afflictions*, and *Deliverances* from them. It would be an excellent Speech, and highly for our commendation, if any of us could say, O my dear God ! what a *Blessed change* hath this late Affliction wrought in me ! with what a *damp* has it struck the *Lusts* and foul *Evaporations* of the Flesh ! how has it smooth'd my Temper, and sunk my Passions into a Calm ! how has this *Sickness* made me to nauseate my former *Luxuries* ! how do I now see the Vanity of glorying in Strength or Beauty, and that *Riches* profit not in the day of *Wrath* ! what a Spring of pure and more rais'd Thoughts, what an Elevation of Mind above the Flatteries and Temptations of the World do I now find ! how strangely is the current of my Affections turn'd from things on Earth, to things above ! what a Resurrection of Soul and Body do I already feel, by having my Conversation in Heaven ! Thus have I seen a Sinner made a Convert by *Afflictions*, and rising from a *Sick-bed* to a *Repentance*, to a *Spiritual Life*, become glorious for *Piety* ; and having adorn'd and trim'd up his Soul with all the Vertues of Religion, rejoyce as a *Bridegroom* to run the *Race of Holiness* : O Happy and Blessed Change indeed ! thus to be transform'd into the *Divine Nature*, thus to have our *Minds* purified from all Earthliness and Sensuality, and so be fitted for the Happiness of a *Spiritual*

H World !

*World ! Wherefore, seeing we have been afflicted, and are made whole, let us follow our Saviour's cautionary Advice, to Sin no more, and settle it firmly in our Hearts, that nothing, by the Assistances of the Divine Grace, shall dispence with our purposes, or alloil our Resolutions of walking before God in Newness of Life, and serving him in Righteousness and true Holiness all our days, Rom. 6. 4. Luke 1. 75.*

*Thirdly, and lastly, We ought to be very studious and careful to spend that Time exceeding well which God hath so graciously lent us.*

*We see how quickly the Thred of Humane Life is snap'd asunder, and how suddenly our fellow Mortals drop away, in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye. And truly, if we contemplate our Composition, and what a frail and brittle contexture our Bodies are of, we cannot, in reason, expect any long continuance here ; for, we are made but of a mouldring Substance : We dwell, says Job, ch. 4. ver. 19. in Houses of Clay, whose Foundation is in the dust : and where there is no better Foundation than Dust, the Superstructure and Building cannot possibly last long. Nay, our Life is so far from having any certainty or lastingness, that 'tis compared to a Vapour, by St. James, to a Span, by David, to the Swiftnes of a Post, by Job ; and is always described by things of the shortest Duration and Extent ; and therefore, 'tis an egregious Folly, that because*  
*God*



God has spared us once or twice, to presume that we shall be able to rub through many such Bouts, and live much longer ; for, though we have very narrowly escap'd Death, in a long and dangerous *Sickness*, yet, this is no Bar or Security against *Sickness* or *sudden Death* for the future. So that we are to look upon the Life that God hath given us, only as a Reprieve from the Grave for a little time, in order to our preparing and making all things fit for our dying day. And truly, if we should run to the ultimate period and Tropick of Mortality, we have, at most, but few days to live. We know upon what Tenure we hold our Life, that it is at the sole Will and Disposal of the Lord our Maker, and that we owe our Preservation to God's *Mercy* and *Forbearance*, which, how soon it may expire, none of us can tell. And therefore we are concerned to make the best Use we can of the small pittance of Time allotted us in this World ; and, I presume, we cannot bestow it better, than in often reading the Scriptures, in Prayer, Meditation, a frequent and Solemn Address to the Holy Sacrament, and such *Religious Exercises*. And, as the Eunuch, *Acts* 8. 28. was so choice and curious of his time, as not to let any portion of it slip away to a disadvantage ; but, when he was in his Chariot, and travelling upon the Road, took the Bible in his hand, and entertain'd the Time with Divine

*Vita summa brevis  
vis spern nos ve-  
tat inchoare lon-  
gam. Hor. Ode 4.*

Meditations on the Scripture; so are we not to lose an inch of Time, or to suffer the least moment to pass away unprofitably, or vainly, but, even to redeem the common Minutes of Life to the Holy purposes of Religion; so that, whether we are walking or talking, eating or drinking, working, or diverting our selves, *Heaven* is to be the Centre of our *Thoughts* and *Affections*; and thither must we resort in our Minds when we are in a croud of Business, when we are most deeply engaged in our necessary Affairs and Worldly Occupations; and thus shall we make our whole Life a continued Act of Religion, and by employing our Time so very well, it will not much matter whether we dye sooner or later, because we can never dye amiss, or out of season, when Religion has been the grand Exercise of our Minds, and the usual Entertainment of our Time. And if we would be in a condition to render a good account of our Time with Joy, and not with Grief, in the Great Audit of the World, we ought to have a special care not to prostitute our Time to *mean, ignoble, worthless* Enterprises, *i. e.* that we be not over-solicitous about *little things*, and negligent in the *main concernments* of *Eternity*; that we do not tease out the little Remains of Life in vain and fruitless *Disputations*, which are apt to engender *Strife*, or in nice *Philosophical Disquisitions*, which tend very much to introduce a *Scepticism* in Religion; nor yet suffer some unpractical, in-

deter-



determinable *Questions* in *Theology*, to swallow up our moments or *Salvation*. 'Tis then our best and safest way to engage in some Good and Warrantable Work, and in the practice of such Vertues as may stand us in stead at the *Hour of Death*, and do us service beyond the *Grave*, that so we may receive and inherit that *Blessedness* which the Lord hath promised at his coming, to all those he shall find *so doing*. Thus, if we shall take care to leave no Spaces or Interstices of our Time, no separate Hours, or just Recesses from the necessary Cares of our particular Callings and Employments, fruitless and void of a due improvement, but like Nature admit no *vacuum*, even as it is reported of *Cesar Augustus*, That he was so frugal and chary of his Time, as not to lose one moment, but would be reading or writing something even whilst he was under the Barber's hands: we shall then answer the Mercies of our Preservation, and shall live a great deal in a little time, and be fit for Heaven, before most, perhaps, have allowed themselves any time or leisure to think of it.

*Ac modo ronderet, modo raderet barbam: eo-que ipso tempore aut legeret aliquid aut etiam scriberet. Suet. in Vit. Cæs. Aug.*

*Ac plura etatis spatium sibi vir bonus.*

Now, to close up all, Let me beg of you, to suffer a word or two of Exhortation, which is, That we would be true and stedfast to those Promises we so solemnly made when we lay upon

our Sick-Beds, how that if it would please God but to spare us a little longer, and that we might recover our Health and Strength, we would then become *New Creatures*, and make a thorow Change and Reformation of our Lives; Let then, as many of us as have laboured under the late *Epidemick Distemper* of the Season, or any other *Disease*, and are now restored to our former integrity of Health, reflect upon the great and wonderful Goodness of God, in redeeming our Life from Destruction, and what manner of Persons we ought to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness. Oh! Let not those holy Vows which we made in a time of Trouble, and the hour of Distress, pass away as the morning Dew, upon the return of our Health and Vigour! Let not our Sacred Promises of striving against Sin, untwist, like Cords of Vanity, or melt, like heaps of Snow before the Sun, at the approaches of the next warm Temptation; but earnestly beg of God to assist us in the purposes and Resolutions of Holy Living, and that he would carry on to perfection that good Work which is already begun in us, that so we may put in practice what we so lately and devoutly resolv'd upon, and proceed actually to perform those Duties and Exercises of Religion, which we could only have in our Intentions in the time of our Sickness. God forbid that we should shew ourselves so abominably false and trifling, as to re-

cede



cede from those Protestations of Amendment which we made in the greatest Solemnities of *Sorrow* and *Repentance*; or that we should, by the breach of our most holy Vows, and a re-assumption of our former *Evil Habits*, let the World see that we were only in jest, when, for ought we knew, we lay upon our Death-beds, and were going to our last Accounts. What a miserable thing would it have been for any of us to have left the World with an egregious Lye in our mouth, and such Falshood in our Hearts, as, it is certain, all those would have done, who, having had the Mercy of a retreat from the Grave, do now, in the flourishes of their Health, *turn aside, like a deceitful Bow*, from their Sick-Bed Engagements; and walking in the former *Vanity* of their *Minds*, do either forget, or make no Conscience of paying their Vows to the Almighty. Nay, what an unpardonable Baseness and Perfidiousness must it needs be, to turn *Rene-gado's* now that God has in his tender Mercy given us our Lives once more; and what excuse can we possibly make for our selves, when we tread *Antipodes* to our sworn *Allegiance*, and repeated stipulations of *Obedience*. But, *O that we were wise!* and would consider the Covenant we made with God in the midst of our Extremity, and when Heaven and Hell, Wisdom and Folly, made the most serious impressions on our mind, that so remembering the severe challenges of Conscience upon the ac-

count of our Sins, and those serenities of Mind which we found in a reflection upon some good Action, how much our Sins began, at that doleful time, to torment us, and how passionately we vow'd the Love and Prosecution of Virtue for the future, we may now improve the present opportunity of our Health to the best advantage, and shew the sincerity of our Hearts in our late Resolutions of better Obedience, *by bringing forth fruits meet for Repentance*, and may so order our Conversation, during our short continuance here, as to bless the World with our Virtues, and prove a Credit to Religion, by arriving to a *Glory in Goodness*. In a word, By such an incomparable Life we shall glorifie God, and, at the end of our days, expire with unspeakable Joy and Comfort, leaving behind us a precious and immortal Memory, in having been so exemplary in our Generation.

F I N I S.



